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FM AMCONSUL JERUSALEM
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3233
INFO RUEHXK/ARAB ISRAELI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/WHITE HOUSE NSC PRIORITY
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UNCLAS JERUSALEM 002035

SIPDIS

NEA FOR FRONT OFFICE. NSC FOR ABRAMS/RAMCHAND/PASCUAL

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TAGS: KWBG PGOV PREL PTER PHUM KPAL IS
SUBJECT: NIR BARKAT WINS JERUSALEM MAYORAL ELECTION

REF: JERUSALEM 02013

¶1. (U) Summary. "Secular/nationalist" candidate Nir Barkat
won the election for Jerusalem's mayor and takes office in
early December. He promised in his victory speech to address
the needs of secular, religious, and Arab residents of the
city. Nearly all Palestinians and some ultra-Orthodox
Jerusalemites boycotted the vote. End Summary.

NIR BARKAT WINS JERUSALEM MAYORAL ELECTION

¶2. (U) "Secular/nationalist" candidate Nir Barkat won the
election for Jerusalem's mayor November 11 with 52 percent of
the votes. In his victory speech, he said "there is room in
Jerusalem for everyone," reaching out to the city's divided
population, secular and religious, Jewish and Arab. Barkat
and the new city council members will take office 21 days
after the election (o/a December 2). Press report that
Barkat hopes to build a city council coalition including
members of all parties, even though the majority of council
members are secular.

¶3. (U) Barkat is a native Jerusalemite and self-made
millionaire in the high-tech field. He led the city council
opposition for the last five years and is involved in
entrepreneurial and non-profit projects in the city. His
campaign promised to balance the needs of secular and
religious communities in Jerusalem and improve conditions in
Palestinian neighborhoods. Barkat also promised to construct
new Israeli neighborhoods in East Jerusalem and link
neighboring settlements, such as Ma'ale Adumim and the Gush
Etzion bloc, to Jerusalem initiatives. He said he would use
the Municipality to resist negotiations with Palestinians
over Jerusalem.

PALESTINIANS, SOME ULTRA-ORTHODOX BOYCOTT POLLS
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¶4. (U) Israeli press reported small-scale clashes with
police during the voting in areas where Palestinians and
ultra-Orthodox men tried to discourage voters from going to
the polls. While most ultra-Orthodox voters turned out for
runner-up Meir Porush, infighting among ultra-Orthodox groups
caused some to stay home or vote for other candidates. Press
also reported a historically low two percent turnout of East
Jerusalem Palestinians.

WALLES